

**HOMILY
BY ADAM CARDINAL MAIDA
CSA SUNDAY
APRIL 26-27, 2003**

Readings: Second Sunday of Easter

My Brothers and Sisters:

As we continue to celebrate the joy of Easter, we are also aware of the pain and suffering of our world. We are anxious and pray for a peaceful and rapid resolution to the tensions and strife in the Middle East, and an end to violence on our own city streets. The past year or so has also been very economically challenging for many of us, and our Church itself has had to live through painful public embarrassment because of sins and mistakes made by priests and bishops over the years. Hopefully, we have now taken the steps necessary to ensure that these problems are behind us and we can move forward as renewed people of God. A beautiful symbolic expression of our new beginnings was the rededication of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral last month.

All of these thoughts – both joyful and sorrowful – were on my mind and in my heart as we were establishing a theme for CSA 2003, our annual Archdiocesan fund drive. The theme we chose is, “*The Power to Change*.” The mystery of Easter celebrates change – how God the Father transformed His Son’s Suffering and Death into the victory of new life and resurrection. Our every Eucharist also celebrates transformation as our gifts of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord. The whole Christian life of faith gives us a reason to hope and work for change – in ourselves, in the Church, and in our world.

Each of us has a great deal of power – even when we do not realize it. No matter how apparently insignificant we may feel, all of our words and deeds – even our very silence itself – can have a powerful effect on other people, building up or tearing down the well-being of our families and our Church. Like the widow who put her two cents into the offering basket in the temple, each of us has something to give and we also need to receive. That is why we are a community of faith, experiencing the Risen Lord Jesus in and through our lives with each other.

St. Thomas, whose name means “twin” – or as he is often called, *Doubting* Thomas – is really *our* twin, our brother, for every one of us has had doubts and fears about ourselves and others and even about the Church itself. Thomas had to learn to trust the word of the other disciples, to believe in the message of the Church; the same is true for us today, two thousand years later. Our means of experiencing the Risen Lord is by touching His wounded yet holy Body, the Church, a Church that is a source of grace and healing, but a Church still on its pilgrim way, always in need of renewal and change.

Your contributions to the annual Catholic Services Appeal of the Archdiocese for the last twenty years have kept our Church financially stable and able to support its many ministries and outreach services. Through your generous support, we are able to finance the work of coordinating Catholic schools and programs of religious instruction, the formation of pastoral leaders and youth ministers, priests and deacons. Your generosity enables the Catholic Church to be present in hospitals, prisons and jails, and on the campuses of our metro area colleges. Thanks to your help, the Catholic Church can live up to its message of proclaiming the Gospel of Life and providing pastoral assistance to immigrants through legal and refuge resettlement for newly-arrived peoples from all around the globe. Your dollars help us to stay on the air through Catholic television and in the publication of The Michigan Catholic. Because of your support for the CSA, we can offer extensive programming of marriage preparation and programs to strengthen marriages, even as we also reach out to couples needing the services of our Metropolitan Tribunal. Parish and vicariate discussion and planning are also a concrete expression of your CSA dollars at work.

I want to assure you that no CSA dollars from the past have ever been used for financing settlements of abuse cases here in the Archdiocese; nor will your CSA dollars for this year be used for any such purpose. Your CSA dollars fund the normal operating budget of the Archdiocese with its employees who work for the good of the whole Church of Detroit. Special projects such as the renovation of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral and St. John Center for Youth and Family have been funded through special collections for those purposes.

Over the years, you have been most generous to the work of the Church of Detroit, very supportive of me and all of our pastors. In their name and in the name of all the people who benefit from the CSA, I thank you and ask you to be generous yet again this year, now more than ever. It is through the CSA that we have the power to change, the power to renew our Church and our world, to bring about greater justice and peace everywhere.

May the Risen Lord Jesus continue to bless and guide you and your families and bring peace to our world. Amen. Alleluia.